

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine, comprising:

a sulfur component holding agent arranged in the exhaust path of the internal combustion engine for holding a sulfur component;

a NO_x holding agent arranged downstream of said sulfur component holding agent in the exhaust gas for holding NO_x and the sulfur components when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas flowing therein is lean; and

reducing agent adding means disposed between said sulfur component holding agent and said NO_x holding agent, said reducing agent adding means for adding a reducing agent to the exhaust gas flowing into said NO_x holding agent;

wherein the concentration of the sulfur component in the reducing agent added by said reducing agent adding means is lower than the concentration of the sulfur component in the fuel supplied to a combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine.

2. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a bypass for bypassing said NO_x holding agent and a flow rate regulation valve for controlling the flow rate of the exhaust gas flowing into said bypass,

wherein said sulfur component holding agent holds the sulfur component in the exhaust gas flowing therein in the case where the sulfur component holding conditions are satisfied, and releases said sulfur component held thereby in the case where the sulfur component releasing conditions are satisfied, and

wherein the sulfur releasing conditions are caused to be satisfied and the greater part of the exhaust gas flows into said bypass in the case where the sulfur component is released from said sulfur component holding agent.

3. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine, comprising:

a sulfur component holding agent arranged in the exhaust path of the internal combustion engine for holding a sulfur component;

a NO_x holding agent arranged downstream of said sulfur component holding agent in the exhaust gas for holding NO_x and the sulfur components when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas flowing therein is lean;

a reducing agent adding means for adding a reducing agent to the exhaust gas flowing into said NO_x holding agent; and

an annular path branching from said exhaust path and returning to said branching portion, and a flow rate regulation valve for controlling the flow rate of the exhaust gas flowing into said annular path and the direction in which the exhaust gas flows into said annular path,

wherein the concentration of the sulfur component in the reducing agent added by said reducing agent adding means is lower than the concentration of the sulfur component in the fuel supplied to a combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine,

said sulfur component holding agent holds the sulfur component in the exhaust gas flowing therein in the case where the sulfur component holding conditions are satisfied, and releases said sulfur component held thereby in the case where the sulfur component releasing conditions are satisfied,

said NO_x holding agent is arranged on said annular path, said flow rate regulation valve is arranged at said branching portion, and,

when the sulfur component is released from said sulfur component holding agent, the sulfur releasing conditions are caused to be satisfied and said flow rate regulation valve causes the greater part of the exhaust gas to flow through the exhaust path downstream of said branching portion without flowing into said annular path.

4. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 3,

wherein said reducing agent adding means is arranged on said annular path.

5. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 3,

wherein the greater part of the exhaust gas flows into the annular path from the exhaust path in such a manner as to flow in one direction through said annular path in the case where said flow rate regulation valve is in a first working position, and while the greater part of the exhaust gas flows into the annular path from the exhaust path in such a manner as to flow in the opposite direction through said annular path in the case where said flow rate regulation valve is in a second working position.

6. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 1,

wherein said NO_x holding agent is carried on a particulate filter capable of trapping particulates contained in the exhaust gas flowing thereinto.

7. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 1,

wherein the concentration of the sulfur component in said reducing agent is substantially zero.

8. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 1,

wherein said reducing agent is selected one of light oil and methane.

9. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 1,

wherein said reducing agent is stored in a tank different from the tank for storing the fuel supplied to the combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine.

10. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 1,

wherein said reducing agent is changed in quality from the fuel supplied to the combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine.

11. (Original) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

a tank having two fuel supply paths including a fuel supply path for supplying the fuel to the combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine and a fuel supply path for supplying the fuel to said reducing agent adding means, and

a desulfurizing unit, for changing the quality of the fuel, arranged in the fuel supply path for supplying the fuel to said reducing agent adding means.

12. (Currently Amended) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine, comprising:

a sulfur component holding agent arranged in the exhaust path of the internal combustion engine for holding a sulfur component when an air-fuel ratio is lean or substantially stoichiometric or rich with a temperature of the sulfur component holding agent being below a sulfur component releasing temperature, and for releasing the sulfur component when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is rich and the temperature exceeds the releasing temperature;

a NO_x holding agent arranged downstream of said sulfur component holding agent in the exhaust gas for holding NO_x and the sulfur components when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas flowing therein is lean;

a flow rate regulation valve for controlling a portion of the exhaust gas to bypass the NO_x holding agent through a bypass; and

reducing agent adding means for adding a reducing agent to the exhaust gas flowing into said NO_x holding agent, the reducing agent adding means arranged between the flow rate regulation valve and the NO_x holding agent,

wherein the concentration of the sulfur component in the reducing agent added by said reducing agent adding means is lower than the concentration of the sulfur component in the fuel supplied to a combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine.

13. (Currently Amended) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 12, ~~further comprising a bypass for bypassing said NO_x holding agent and a flow rate regulation valve for controlling the flow rate of the exhaust gas flowing into said bypass,~~

wherein said sulfur component holding agent holds the sulfur component in the exhaust gas flowing therein in the case where the sulfur component holding conditions are satisfied, and releases said sulfur component held thereby in the case where the sulfur component releasing conditions are satisfied, and

wherein the sulfur releasing conditions are caused to be satisfied and the greater part of the exhaust gas flows into said bypass in the case where the sulfur component is released from said sulfur component holding agent.

14. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 12,

wherein said NO_x holding agent is carried on a particulate filter capable of trapping particulates contained in the exhaust gas flowing thereinto.

15. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 12,

wherein the concentration of the sulfur component in said reducing agent is substantially zero.

16. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 12,

wherein said reducing agent is selected one of light oil and methane.

17. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 12,

wherein said reducing agent is stored in a tank different from the tank for storing the fuel supplied to the combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine.

18. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 12,

wherein said reducing agent is changed in quality from the fuel supplied to the combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine.

19. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission purification device for an internal combustion engine as set forth in claim 18, further comprising:

a tank having two fuel supply paths including a fuel supply path for supplying the fuel to the combustion chamber of the internal combustion engine and a fuel supply path for supplying the fuel to said reducing agent adding means, and

a desulfurizing unit, for changing the quality of the fuel, arranged in the fuel supply path for supplying the fuel to said reducing agent adding means.